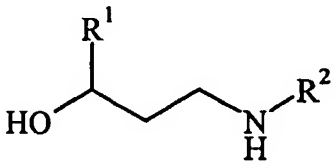
AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This Listing Of Claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of the claims in the application.

Listing of the Claims:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A process for the preparation of a compound of formula:

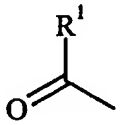


I

and/or an addition salt of a proton acid, wherein R^1 represents C_{1-8}-alkyl or phenyl, and R^2 represents alkyl, cycloalkyl, aryl or aralkyl, each aryl or aralkyl being optionally further substituted with alkyl, alkoxy and/or halogen, which process comprises the following steps:

a) reacting a mixture comprising:

(i) a methyl ketone of formula:



IV

wherein R^1 is as defined above, and

(ii) a compound of formula:

$H_2N–R^2$ V

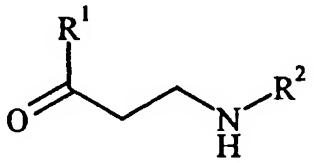
and/or an addition salt of proton acid of the compound of formula V, wherein R^2 is as defined above, and

(iii) formaldehyde or a source of formaldehyde selected from the group consisting of formaldehyde in aqueous solution, 1,3,5-trioxane, paraformaldehyde and mixtures thereof, in the presence of

a solvent selected from the group consisting of water, aliphatic alcohols, cycloaliphatic alcohols and mixtures thereof, and

optionally a proton acid,

to provide a β-keto amine of formula:



II

and/or an addition salt of a proton acid of the ß-keto amine of formula II, wherein R^1 and R^2 are as defined above,

wherein the step a) is carried out at a pressure ~~in range~~ of <u>at least</u> 1.5 ~~to 10~~ bar, and

b) reducing the carbonyl group of the β-keto amine of formula II to afford a compound of formula I, and/or an addition salt of a proton acid of the ß-keto amine of formula II.

Claim 2 (Previously Presented): The process of claim 1 wherein R^1 is linear or branched C_{1-8}-alkyl.

Claim 3 (Previously Presented): The process of claim 1 wherein R^2 is selected from the group consisting of linear or branched C_{1-8}-alkyl, C_{3-8}-cycloalkyl, phenyl, naphthyl, furanyl, benzofuranyl, thienyl, benzo[b]thienyl and aralkyl, wherein the alkyl moiety of the aralkyl residue is linear C_{1-4}-alkyl, and the aryl moiety is selected from the group consisting of phenyl, naphthyl, furanyl, benzofuranyl, thienyl and benzo[b]thienyl, each aryl or aralkyl being optionally substituted with halogen, linear or branched C_{1-4}-alkyl, linear or branched C_{1-4}-alkoxy, C_{3-6}-cycloalkyl, CF_3, C_2F_5, OCF_3 or OC_2F_5.

Claim 4 (Previously Presented): The process of claim 1, wherein the compound of formula V is present in an amount at least equimolar to that of the compound of formula IV.

Claim 5 (Previously Presented): The process of claim 1, wherein the proton acid is present in step a) and is a carboxylic acid or an inorganic acid.

Claim 6 (Previously Presented): The process of claim 1, wherein aliphatic and cycloaliphatic alcohols are selected from the group selected of linear or branched aliphatic C_{1-12}-alcohols, cycloaliphatic C_{5-8}-alcohols, di- and/or triethylene glycols and mono C_{1-4}-alkyl or acetyl derivatives thereof, each of said alcohols containing 1 to 3 hydroxy groups.

Claim 7 (Previously Presented): The process of claim 6, wherein the alcohol is selected from the group consisting of methanol, ethanol, propanol, isopropyl alcohol, butanol, isobutanol, tert-butanol, 1-pentanol, 2-pentanol, 3-pentanol, 1-hexanol, 2-hexanol, cyclopentanol, cyclohexanol, 1,2-ethanediol, 1,2-propanediol, 1,2-butanediol, 2,3-butanediol, 1,4-butanediol, 1,2,3-pro-panetriol, 1,2,6-hexanetriol, diethylene glycol, diethylene glycol monomethyl ether, diethylene glycol monoethyl ether, diethylene glycol monobutyl ether, diethylene glycol monoacetate, triethylene glycol, triethylene glycol monomethyl ether, triethylene glycol monoethyl ether, triethylene glycol monobutyl ether and triethylene glycol monoacetate.

Claims 8 to 20 (Cancelled).

Claim 21 (Previously Presented): The process of claim 2 wherein R^2 is linear or branched C_{1-8}-alkyl.

Claim 22 (Previously Presented): The process of claim 3, wherein the compound of formula V is present in an amount at least equimolar to that of the compound of formula IV.

Claim 23 (Previously Presented): The process of claim 4, wherein a proton acid is present in step a) and is a carboxylic acid or an inorganic acid.

Claim 24 (Previously Presented): The process of claim 5, wherein aliphatic and cycloaliphatic alcohols are selected from the group selected of linear or branched aliphatic C_{1-12}-alcohols, cycloaliphatic C_{5-8}-alcohols, di- and/or triethylene glycols and mono C_{1-4}-alkyl or acetyl derivatives thereof, each of said alcohols containing 1 to 3 hydroxy groups.

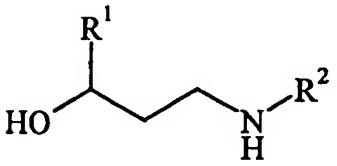
Claims 25 to 30 (Cancelled).

Claim 31 (Cancelled).

Claim 32 (Cancelled).

Claim 33 (Previously Presented): The process of Claim 1, wherein R^1 is phenyl.

Claim 34 (Previously Presented): A process for the preparation of a compound of formula:

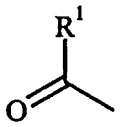


I

and/or an addition salt of a proton acid, wherein R^1 represents linear or branched C_{1-8}-alkyl, and R^2 is phenyl, which process comprises the following steps:

a) reacting a mixture comprising:

(i) a methyl ketone of formula:



IV

wherein R^1 is as defined above, and

(ii) a compound of formula:

$H_2N–R^2$ V

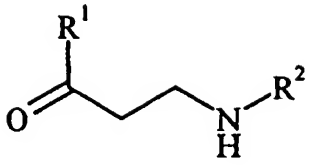
and/or an addition salt of proton acid of the compound of formula V, wherein R^2 is defined above, and

(iii) formaldehyde or a source of formaldehyde selected from the group consisting of formaldehyde in aqueous solution, 1,3,5-trioxane, paraformaldehtde and mixtures thereof, in the presence of

a solvent selected from the group consisting of water, aliphatic alcohols, cycloaliphatic alcohols and mixtures thereof, and

optionally a proton acid,

to provide a ß-keto amine of formula:



II

and/or an addition salt of a proton acid of the ß-keto amine of formula II, wherein R^1 and R^2 as defined above,

wherein the step a) is carried out at a pressure of least 1.5 bar, and

b) reducing the carbonyl group of the ß-keto amine of formula II to afford a compound of formula I, and/or an addition salt of a proton acid of the ß-keto amine of formula II.

Claim 35 (Previously Presented): The process of claim 1, wherein a proton acid is present, and the proton acid is selected from the group consisting of formic acid, acetic acid, propionic acid, oxalic acid, malonic acid, benzoic acid, HF, HCl, HBr, HI, H_2SO_4, H_3PO_4, mono alkali malonate, alkali hydrogensulfates, alkali hydrogenphosphates and alkali hydrogencarbonates.

Claim 36 (Previously Presented): The process of claim 34 , wherein a proton acid is present, and the proton acid is selected from the group consisting of formic acid, acetic acid, propionic acid, oxalic acid, malonic acid, benzoic acid, HF, HCl, HBr, HI, H_2SO_4, H_3PO_4, mono alkali malonate, alkali hydrogensulfates, alkali hydrogenphosphates and alkali hydrogencarbonates.

Claim 37 (Previously Presented): The process of claim 34, wherein the pressure during reaction step a) is in the range of 1.5 to 10 bar.

Claim 38 (Previously Presented): The process of claim 34, wherein reduction reaction mixture from the reduction step b) is treated with an organic solvent and an aqueous base whereby the addition salt of a proton acid of the ß-keto amine of formula I in the reduction reaction mixture from reduction step a) is converted to the ß-keto amine of formula I.

Claim 39 (Previously Presented): The process of claim 1, wherein the reaction mixture a) is comprised of 2-acetophenone, methylamine hydrochloride, paraformaldehyde and hydrochloric acid.

Claim 40 (Previously Presented): The process of Claim 1, wherein R^1 is phenyl and R^2 is methyl.

Claim 41 (New): The process of claim 1, wherein the pressure during reaction step a) is in the range of 1.5 to 10 bar.

Claim 42 (New): The process of claim 7, wherein the pressure during reaction step a) is in the range of 1.5 to 10 bar.

Claim 43 (New): The process of claim 41, wherein the pressure during reaction step a) is in the range of 1.5 to 5.

Claim 44 (New): The process of claim 42, wherein the pressure during reaction step a) is in the range of 1.5 to 5.